



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY OFFERS TIPS FOR A SAFE THANKSGIVING FEAST

RALEIGH — To help make this holiday season as festive and safe as possible, Gov. Mike Easley reminds all North Carolinians and our guests to take extra care during the preparation of their Thanksgiving and other holiday feasts.

"The holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends," Easley said. "The last thing any of us want to see is illness brought on by improper food preparation. It is important to take special care and follow advice from public health professionals in cooking your holiday meals."

Turkey Tips

- **Thawing and storing** – Buying a fresh or frozen turkey is a personal preference, and there are different safety tips to keep in mind for each. Buy a fresh turkey no more than two days ahead of time and make sure you have space in the refrigerator to store it without contaminating other food with the juices from the bird. If you choose to buy a frozen turkey, defrost it in the refrigerator, allowing 24 hours for every five pounds. Never defrost it on the kitchen counter. The frozen turkey can also be thawed in cold water, but be sure to change the water every 30 minutes until the turkey is thawed.
- **Cooking** – Thawing a turkey completely before cooking is important. If it is not thawed, the outside of the turkey will be done before the inside is hot enough to kill harmful bacteria. The safest way to cook stuffing is separately from the turkey. If you choose to stuff a turkey, however, mix the ingredients immediately before filling the cavity and stuff loosely to ensure even cooking. Regardless of whether inside or outside the turkey, however, stuffing must reach an internal temperature of 165°F when measured in the center. The turkey will be done when it reaches 180°F in the inner thigh area. When taking the temperature of the bird, make certain that the thermometer is not touching the bone.

Additional turkey hotline and food safety information can be found at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources website: <http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/ehs/food/fudlinks.htm>.

If you are preparing seafood as part of your holiday meal, buy only fresh seafood that is refrigerated or properly iced. Throw away any shellfish that do not open during cooking. In addition, people with liver or kidney disorders, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS or an otherwise weakened immune system should not eat raw or partially cooked oysters, clams or mussels because such foods place them at an increased risk of developing a serious illness.

If you choose to serve eggnog, please keep in mind that raw, unpasteurized eggs are often a source of food-borne disease. Use pasteurized shell eggs or serve commercially prepared eggnog. In addition, the U.S. Food and Drug

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